



**For immediate release  
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## **SCHOONER ERNESTINA HEADING TO MAINE FOR NECESSARY REPAIRS**

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is sending the state's 114-year-old Schooner Ernestina, a National Historic Landmark and official vessel of the Commonwealth, from the ship's home port of New Bedford to Boothbay Harbor, Maine, for repairs. The ship, with a captain and four-member crew, is expected to leave New Bedford on Friday, June 6, at 6 a.m. and will be towed to Maine.

Ernestina is expected to enter the Cape Cod Canal at about 9 a.m. on Friday, three hours after leaving New Bedford. Captain Charles Mitchell of Mitchell Towing and Salvage Co. of Fairhaven will be towing the ship, and Captain Dave Thompson of Boothbay Harbor Shipyard will be in charge of Ernestina.

Once in Maine, Ernestina will enter the Boothbay Harbor Shipyard to begin a summer-long rehabilitation of the front of the vessel. The work will include repairing the stem, foredeck, and planking above the waterline alongside the foredeck. Temporary repairs to the main deck will also be done to halt leaking.

The repair work will follow the standards set forth by the federal Standards for Historic Vessel Preservation Projects and the U.S. Coast Guard. Harold Burnham of Essex, an 11th-generation master shipwright, will serve as the liaison between the shipyard and DCR, which oversees the operation of the vessel in conjunction with the Schooner Ernestina Commission.

"This is a very exciting moment for us all," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "Ernestina hasn't sailed since 2004, and the goal is to have the ship certified by the Coast Guard after this rehabilitation so she can sail once again and carry out her many educational programs."

The roughly \$600,000 in funding for this initial work, comes from a \$250,000 grant from DCR's Partnerships Matching Funds Program, \$130,000 from Ernestina's operating budget, and funds from a \$500,000 National Park Service Save America's Treasures matching grant.

DCR has also signed an agreement with the National Park Service Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) to develop

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drawings, histories, and photographs of the vessel. The bulk of the documentation work will be completed by mid-September, and a final product is expected to be available in late 2009 after extensive editing and review.

“This reference document will provide invaluable information to guide future preservation decisions, and ensure that Ernestina’s historical integrity is maintained,” said Paul J. Brawley, executive director of the Schooner Ernestina.

The total cost of Ernestina’s rehabilitation, outfitting, and manning, including the work being done in Boothbay Harbor, is estimated to be nearly \$3.5 million.

“We still have a great deal of work that needs to be done to rehabilitate the main deck, transom, and stern post,” said Brawley, “not to mention upgrades to the ship’s mechanical and electrical systems, rigging, and sails.”

Ernestina was designed by George M. McClain, built in the James & Tarr Yard in Essex, Massachusetts, and launched in February 1894. The ship was first named the Effie M. Morrissey and was later renamed Ernestina.

Ernestina is the oldest surviving Grand Banks fishing schooner. The ship has been an Arctic exploration vessel, a U.S. Naval vessel in World War II, a Cape Verde packet ship, and most recently a sail training education vessel for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In 1982, the Republic of Cape Verde, with the financial support of the Friends of Ernestina/Morrissey, restored Ernestina and presented the ship as a gift to the people of the United States and ultimately to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where the ship was built.

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*The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency’s mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr). Contact us at [mass.parks@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.parks@state.ma.us).*